



RFCS future focus

April 2008 no. 21

National Rural Financial Counselling Conference 2008

Formal invitations for the National Rural Financial Counselling Conference 2008 in Adelaide are being emailed to invitees this week. The conference will be held on 11 and 12 June and will be followed on 13 June by a forum for service provider chairs and executive officers, state government representatives and departmental officers.

The agenda for the conference will be available online on the 'RFCS administration' page at www.rfcs.gov.au from 5 May. The conference program includes sessions on markets and consumers for Australian agriculture, the science of Australia's natural climate, the social aspects of adjusting to change, Australian Government policy directions for agriculture, rural financial counsellors' role in the changing face of agriculture, and tips and techniques for helping others cope with change. There will be an official dinner hosted by the Office of Rural Financial Counselling on Wednesday 11 June at the venue.

Staffing changes within the Office of Rural Financial Counselling

Several staff are moving on from the team in Canberra and we would like to wish them all the very best in their new endeavours. After many years with rural financial counselling, Edna Sharpe is moving to another position within DAFF. After not as many years with us, Mitchell Grove is resigning from the department to return home to the coast. In the past few months, Michelle Macaulay and Hilary Connors have moved to other positions within the department and David Williams has relocated to NSW where his wife is now working.

Executive officers have been advised of revised state contact officer details which will be updated on our website.

Also of note is the retirement of Ross Dalton, General Manager, Farm Help and Financial Counselling. Many will have met Ross through his visits with the former Parliamentary Secretary last year or the various conferences and workshops we have held. The Office of Rural Financial Counselling team wishes him well for his future.

RFCS Program charter and brochure

The RFCS Program charter and the promotional brochure are being revised in time for the start of the new funding period on 1 July 2008 and we hope to have them available by the end of June. A slightly amended version of the charter is now available online on the 'RFCS administration' page at www.rfcs.gov.au.

From the ARC helpdesk

We have made major enhancements to the ARC database during April. This is a two stage process, with the first batch of updates and fixes released on Monday 21 April:

- A survey function that randomly selects clients has been introduced.
- Executive officers will now be informed via email automatically when counsellors perform their 'Save to DAFF' upload.
- The postcode validation report has been implemented.

continued next page

continued from previous page

- Consolidated activity reports are now run at the service level.
- Headings for the executive officers' comments on ARC Central have been updated.
- The service profile report will be amended under the Counsellor Funding section to include the counsellor's FTE.
- The client birth date field has been updated to conform to other date fields in ARC.
- The reminder screen for non-financial clients has been updated to indicate all information required to remove clients from the reminder list.
- The ability to add business contacts to new clients on the fly has been introduced.

The second batch of updates was released on 22 April:

- Custom lists have been removed from ARC.
- LGA lists have been removed from ARC, with postcodes linking to LGAs for reporting purposes.
- The postcode validation report has been updated.
- General enquiry clients upgraded to full clients will be counted as new clients in the month the upgrade occurs.

If you need any assistance, please phone the ARC helpdesk on 02 6272 3549.

NEWS

Painting a social picture of country Australia—2008 Country matters - social atlas of rural and regional Australia was released on 17 April by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Tony Burke MP. Produced by the Bureau of Rural Sciences, the atlas consists of an interactive online tool, a full report with 73 detailed maps, a summary booklet and four thematic publications discussing drought, employment, social fabric and education. To use the online tool, visit www.brs.gov.au/socialatlas or for hard copies visit www.brs.gov.au/shop.

Water and the Land website updated—The Bureau of Meteorology website Water and the Land (www.bom.gov.au/watl/index.shtml) is an integrated suite of information for people involved in primary production, natural resource management, industry, trade and commerce. The website has been upgraded with new features. In addition to graphical forecasts of rainfall and rainfall probability, farmers can now access forecasts of wind and frost potential. The upgrade also includes graphs of weather observations over the past 72 hours, rainfall ranges for the season ahead and educational information on subjects such as cold fronts and blocking highs.

For comments about *RFCS future focus*, email rfcs@daff.gov.au

[Subscribe](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Contact us:

Website: www.rfcs.gov.au

Email: rfcs@daff.gov.au

Address:

Office of Rural Financial Counselling
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
GPO Box 858
Canberra ACT 2601